United Nations A/C.5/64/SR.32

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
7 June 2010

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 32nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 12 May 2010, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Sène (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Senegal)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

Contents

Agenda item 146: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

Agenda item 158: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Agenda item 161: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

10-35960 (E)

Please recycle

In the absence of Mr. Maurer (Switzerland), Mr. Sène (Senegal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 146: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/64/572 and Corr.1, A/64/611 and Add.1, A/64/652, A/64/697 and Add.1 and 2 and A/64/753)

1. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller), introducing the performance report on the budget of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/64/611 and Add.1), which presented results-based budgeting frameworks for each relevant department and office, with planned and actual indicators of achievement, said that the General Assembly had authorized funding of $282,401,900 for the support account for the 2008/09 period. Expenditure for the same period had amounted to $271,963,600, leaving an unencumbered balance of $10,438,300, an implementation rate of 96.3 per cent.

2. The main causes of the variance were the unspent balance in respect of post resources, attributable to recruitment delays and the resulting higher-than-budgeted vacancy rates in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Management, as well as to delays in the recruitment of suitable candidates for posts in the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), in particular for resident auditor posts in peacekeeping missions; and reduced requirements under non-post resources, attributable, among other factors, to the delay in the implementation of the new administration of justice system, which had come into effect on 1 July 2009. The General Assembly was requested to take the actions set out in paragraph 68 of the performance report.

3. Introducing the proposed support account budget for the 2010/11 period (A/64/697 and Add.1 and 2), which amounted to $313,891,800, excluding enterprise resource planning (ERP) requirements of $57,033,000, he said that the sum concerned represented an increase of $19,860,900 (excluding ERP), or 6.8 per cent, over the resources of $294,030,900 approved for the 2009/10 period. The budget for 2010/11 provided for a total of 1,314 posts, which consisted of 1,245 continuing posts, taking into account the proposed redeployment of four posts to the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, and 73 new posts, including 12 general temporary assistance positions converted to posts.

4. The budget proposal had not been determined by the recommendations of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC), but reflected a comprehensive and independent review of the submissions of each department and office, including OIOS. It had been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/275, which broadly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Advisory Committee's report on the strengthening of OIOS (A/61/880), including the view that the Secretary-General, as the Organization's chief administrative officer, should continue to have responsibility for presenting the budgetary requirements of OIOS. In order to facilitate the review by legislative bodies of the results-based budgeting frameworks, an introductory section outlining the mandate, main responsibilities and major priorities for the 2010/11 period had been included at the beginning of the framework for each division or office of the largest departments funded from the support account.

5. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/243, and based on the revised estimates presented in the first progress report on the enterprise resource planning project (A/64/380), the Secretary-General proposed to fund ERP-related resource requirements of $57,033,000 from the support account for the 2010/11 period. The estimates for the project would be reviewed by the Secretary-General and submitted to the General Assembly in his second progress report on ERP at the main part of its sixty-fifth session.

6. Resource requirements of $1,254,190 relating to the peacekeeping share of the maintenance support costs of the secondary data centre had been included in the support account budget for 2010/11, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/228. The proposed budget also included requirements related to the projected after-service health insurance costs of the current peacekeeping retirees for the 2010/11 period, and information on the impact of applying projected vacancy rates used for continuing posts on the costing of proposed new posts.

7. Variances between the approved 2009/10 budget and the proposed budget for 2010/11 were detailed in section I.B of the report (A/64/697), while information on initiatives to further strengthen support to peacekeeping operations was presented in section I.A.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/287, the addendums to the report (A/64/697/Add.1 and 2) provided information on the rejustification of posts financed under the support account.

8. The main causes of the increase in resource requirements were the proposed net increase in the support account staffing establishment, combined with the increase in standard salary costs and the application of lower projected vacancy rates to newly approved posts for the 2009/10 period, which would continue in 2010/11. With regard to non-post resources, increased requirements under general temporary assistance, facilities and infrastructure, as well as other supplies, services and equipment, were offset in part by reduced requirements for consultants, communications and information technology. The General Assembly was requested to take the actions set out in paragraph 683 of the budget report. The Committee might also wish to note that the Secretary-General, in his report on the budget for the United Nations Office to the African Union (A/64/762), proposed to finance that Office to a considerable extent from the support account for peacekeeping operations.

9. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive analysis of the Office of Military Affairs in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (A/64/572 and Corr.1), which had been prepared pursuant to paragraph 36 of General Assembly resolution 62/250, and considered by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations pursuant to paragraph 37 of that resolution, he said that the report concluded that the strengthened Office was now capable of providing increased strategic direction, oversight and situational awareness; had developed a limited mission start-up, surge and crisis response capacity; and had the full functionality to facilitate the cessation of Strategic Military Cell operations by the target date of 30 June 2010.

10. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to a statement by the Chairman of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, circulated informally, and to the IAAC report on the budget of OIOS under the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 (A/64/652).

11. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the performance report on the support account for 2008/09 and proposed budget for 2010/11 (A/64/753), said that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $4,528,100 in the proposed budget. While the Advisory Committee had noted the efforts made to improve the presentation of the budget, which now included an introductory section setting out the mandate and main priorities of the departments with the largest share of support account resources, it had requested that the presentation should be further improved to include information on initiatives to be implemented over a number of years, indicating accomplishments, outstanding activities and a time frame for completion.

12. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support was essentially complete. In view of the fact that the implementation of integrated operational teams had presented certain challenges and necessitated some adjustments, particularly in relation to the need for a more flexible use of resources at different stages of a mission's lifespan, the Advisory Committee had highlighted issues that should be addressed by the report on the implementation of the integrated operational teams, to be submitted by the Secretary-General at the request of the Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

13. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for a follow-on study on the evolution of the support account in order to develop a staffing model that would relate staffing needs to the size and nature of peacekeeping operations.

14. In view of the unencumbered balance and high average vacancy rates reported in the performance report for 2008/09, and the increase in resources proposed for 2010/11, largely as a result of the increase in standard salary costs and the full costing of 63 new posts approved for 2009/10, the Advisory Committee, in making its recommendations for the support account for 2010/11, had taken into account the need to optimize the use of managerial capacity and improve business processes to handle multiple tasks and functions with greater efficiency and ensure better coordination between Headquarters and field operations.

15. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of 41 of the 73 new posts proposed for 2010/11. In

most cases where the Advisory Committee had recommended against a proposed post, it considered that the functions should be provided from within existing capacity.

16. With regard to non-post resources, the Advisory Committee noted that, although the proposed increase of $2,066,900 appeared modest, it reflected a substantial increase in the provisions for general temporary assistance and facilities and infrastructure, partially offset by decreases in the provision for information technology and consultants.

17. Paragraph 150 of the Advisory Committee's report addressed procedural issues that had arisen with regard to review of proposed OIOS budgets by IAAC, the Advisory Committee and subsequently the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee's detailed recommendations by department and section were set out in paragraphs 49 to 190 of its report, while paragraphs 191 to 195 contained its overall recommendations regarding the performance report for 2008/09 and the proposed budget for 2010/11.

18. **Mr. Al-Shahari** (Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stressed that all peacekeeping operations must be provided with the necessary resources to fulfil their mandates and that sufficient backstopping should be made available in all phases of operations. The level of the support account should broadly correspond to the mandate, number, size and complexity of the operations.

19. The Group was concerned that the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee continued to resubmit proposals that had been rejected by the General Assembly at previous sessions. While changing circumstances might explain such action in certain cases, the near automatic resubmission of proposals under unchanged scenarios, for example in relation to the OIOS Investigations Division, was unacceptable and reflected mismanagement.

20. The Group emphasized the need for genuine partnership, interaction and coordination between the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries, most of which were developing countries, on all matters relating to the support of peacekeeping operations. In that connection, it reiterated the need for proper representation of troop-contributing countries within the relevant Secretariat departments, taking into account their contribution to United Nations peacekeeping, as requested by the General Assembly. The Group was also concerned about the continuing low proportion of women from developing countries in the Secretariat, especially at senior levels.

21. **Mr. Yamada** (Japan), reiterating his delegation's position that the utmost prudence should be exercised in determining the optimal size of the support account, said that efforts should be made to recruit and appoint staff promptly and to make full use of approved posts and positions rather than seeking new ones. Even greater prudence was warranted during the Committee's consideration of the proposed budget for the support account for 2010/11, bearing in mind that efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations should gather momentum in the context of the proposed global field support strategy; that the budget for the account was increasing substantially owing to the cost of reform items; and that the United Nations Logistics Base also had significantly higher requirements, with some possibility of overlap with the support account budget.

22. In view of the fact that the proposed support account budget for 2010/11, excluding ERP requirements, represented a 6.8 per cent increase over approved resources for 2009/10, including increases of 9.7 per cent and 21.9 per cent under post resources and general temporary assistance respectively, and that the number of requested posts and general temporary assistance positions continued to grow, even as military contingents, United Nations police and civilian staff deployed in missions started to decrease, his delegation considered that the Committee should seek further reductions in the proposed budget, beyond those recommended by the Advisory Committee, by scrutinizing the merits of each proposal. In that connection, it was surprising that, three years after the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the creation of the Department of Field Support, there had been very few adjustments in those departments. His delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the need to review existing resource levels and management structures with a view to reassigning, redeploying and reducing existing resources in order to streamline the backstopping of peacekeeping operations, and on the use of general temporary assistance.

23. **Ms. Liu** Bing (China) said that increases in the support account budget should be proportionate to the number and scale of peacekeeping operations. Her delegation noted that the proposed support account

budget for 2010/11 was some 110 per cent higher than the support account resources approved for 2005/06, whereas the projected increase in the total peacekeeping budget for 2010/11 over the same period was 65 per cent. The support provided to peacekeeping operations should be made more efficient and cost-effective by fully utilizing information technology and by improving operational processes, rather than by over-relying on additional resources.

24. Recalling that, owing to the limitations of the study on the evolution of the support account, the Board of Auditors had been unable to meet the Advisory Committee's request for an analysis of how the support account had evolved to its current application and configuration and how it might further evolve, she said that such an analysis would help Member States to consider the support account budget in a systematic manner, establish a model for peacekeeping support staffing and budget levels, and project the future development of the support account. Her delegation looked forward to further studies by the Secretariat on the matter.

25. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's presentation of initiatives to further strengthen support to peacekeeping operations; however, it concurred with the Advisory Committee that more information should be provided on progress with relevant initiatives, timelines, resource requirements and participating departments. In particular, while her delegation supported measures to strengthen backstopping for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), it sought clarification regarding the structural framework of, and mutual relations between, the proposed Somalia coordination and planning team and the proposed Headquarters team in support of AMISOM.

26. It was to be hoped that the Office of Military Affairs, now at virtually full strength, would enhance its capacity to provide strategic guidance and technical expertise, and would acquire a limited mission start-up and surge capacity. With regard to the proposed reclassification to civilian posts of three seconded officers funded by the support account in order to maintain the Office's institutional knowledge and stability, her delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee that continuity and institutional knowledge could be achieved by extending the length of service of seconded personnel and making use of information technology.

Agenda item 158: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (A/64/542, A/64/641 and Corr.1 and A/64/660/Add.14)

Agenda item 161: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (A/64/579 and Corr.1, A/64/660/Add.13 and A/64/685)

27. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller), introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/64/542), said that the General Assembly had appropriated funding of $650,755,600 for the maintenance of the Force and that expenditure had amounted to $575,536,200, leaving an unencumbered balance of $75,219,400, which represented an implementation rate of 88.4 per cent. The main causes of the variance were the delayed deployment of military contingent personnel and the lower average deployment of vessels and helicopters in the Maritime Task Force. The General Assembly was requested to take the actions set out in paragraph 33 of the performance report.

28. The proposed budget of $564,536,900 for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 (A/64/641 and Corr.1) reflected a 4.3 per cent decrease relative to the funding of $589,799,200 appropriated by the General Assembly for the maintenance of the Force for 2009/10. The main causes of the variance were the projected repatriation of military contingent units; reduced requirements for alteration/renovation and construction services; the absence of requirements for the acquisition of generators, projected to be completed during the 2009/10 period; and the acquisition of fewer vehicles and workshop equipment. The General Assembly was requested to take the actions set out in paragraph 125 of the budget report.

29. Introducing the performance report on the budget of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/64/579 and Corr.1), he said that the General Assembly had appropriated funding of $1,499,710,000 for the maintenance of the Operation and that expenditure had amounted to $1,491,279,200, leaving an unencumbered balance of $8,430,800, which represented an implementation rate of 99.4 per cent. The main causes of the variance were reduced requirements for air transportation, military and police

personnel, and new equipment, services and spare parts in respect of communications and information technology. Those lower requirements were offset in part by higher than estimated construction costs and an increased need for security and safety enhancement, the upgrading of rental facilities, and electrical and other upgrades to comply with minimum operating security standards; additional requirements for the establishment of the air bridge to clear the backlog of United Nations-owned and contingent-owned equipment; and increased requirements for civilian personnel. The General Assembly was requested to take the actions set out in paragraph 88 of the performance report.

30. The proposed budget of $1,899,367,200 for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 (A/64/685) reflected an 18.8 per cent increase over the funding of $1,598,942,200 appropriated by the General Assembly for the maintenance of the Operation for 2009/10. The main causes of the variance were increased deployment of military contingents, police and civilian personnel; increased requirements for salaries and common staff costs for international staff; an increase in the costs of flight hours; additional requirements for the inland transportation of United Nations-owned equipment through a third-party logistics contract; and increased requirements for the acquisition of water and septic tanks. The General Assembly was requested to take the actions set out in paragraph 209 of the budget report.

31. The Committee might wish to note that the Secretary-General, in his report on the financing of the United Nations Office to the African Union (A/64/762), proposed to incorporate within that Office the support functions of the Joint Support and Coordination Mechanism in Addis Ababa.

32. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the financing of UNIFIL (A/64/660/Add.14), said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $30,047,700 in the Force's budget. The Advisory Committee recommended the application of a delayed deployment factor of 19 per cent to the estimates for military personnel, rather than the 16 per cent proposed by the Secretary-General, and, with respect to civilian personnel, it recommended vacancy rates of 21 per cent and 20 per cent for international and national staff, respectively, rather than the rates of 15 per cent and 10 per cent proposed by the Secretary-General. Actual civilian vacancy rates and average military deployment rates had never fallen below 21 per cent and 19.2 per cent, respectively, since the 2007/08 period. It recommended approval of the Secretary-General's staffing proposals, including the redeployment and abolishment of a number of posts related to rationalization of the support component.

33. The Advisory Committee supported the proposed consolidation of the regional communications and information technology operations of the four peacekeeping operations in the region, namely UNIFIL, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). In terms of the UNIFIL budget, such consolidation would lead to a reduction of about $1,256,600 in information and communications technology-related equipment costs, offset by additional requirements of $61,000 related to the proposed reclassification of the P-5 Chief of Service post to the D-1 level.

34. The Advisory Committee recommended that the cost estimates for the Tel Aviv office should not be included in the budget for 2010/11. If UNIFIL succeeded in its efforts to establish the office during the budget period, any related expenditure should be reported in the performance report.

35. While the Advisory Committee noted a slight improvement in the UNIFIL budget implementation rate since 2007/08, it was concerned that that improvement was a result of General Assembly decisions rather than improved budget forecasting. It considered that further opportunities for savings could have been identified, and recommended a reduction of 2 per cent, or $11,290,700, in the overall budget. The Advisory Committee's recommendations with regard to the performance report were contained in paragraph 56 of its report (A/64/660/Add.14).

36. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the financing of UNAMID (A/64/660/Add.13), she said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of $60,220,900 in the Operation's budget for 2010/11. Bearing in mind that UNAMID military and police personnel were being deployed at a slower pace than planned, the Advisory Committee recommended the application of delayed deployment factors of 12 per cent for military personnel, 17 per cent for United Nations police and 16 per cent for formed police units, rather than the factors of 10, 15

and 12.5 per cent, respectively, applied by the Secretary-General. It also recommended a 6 per cent reduction in the proposed requirements for operational costs, based on a pattern of under-expenditure in a number of categories and in the light of its recommendation to increase the delayed deployment factors for military and police personnel.

37. The Advisory Committee had no objection to the proposed establishment of the Joint Operations Centre, as described in the budget report (A/64/685), and its staffing structure of 12 posts. The Advisory Committee's recommendations with regard to the performance report were contained in paragraph 76 of its report (A/64/660/Add.13).

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.